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THE RELATION OF THE WHITES TO THE NEGROES.

By President GEORGE T. WINSTON,

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Since the abolition of slavery a great change has taken place in the relations of the whites to the Negroes in the Southern states. This change has been one not merely of ownership and legal authority, but of personal interest, of moral influence, of social and industrial relations.

To-day there is practically no social intercourse between the two races, excepting such as exists between the Negroes and the most degraded whites. It was far different in slavery. Then the two races mingled freely together, not on terms of social equality, but in very extended and constant social intercourse. In almost every household the children of the two races played and frolicked together, or hunted, fished or swam together in the fields, streams and forests. During my childhood and boyhood the greater portion of my play-time was spent in games and sports with Negroes. Scarcely any pleasure was so great to a southern child as playing with Negroes. In the long summer evenings we would play and romp until bed-time in the spacious yard surrounding the house, or in the garden or neighboring fields. I remember well how the evenings would fly by, and how my mother would grant repeated extensions of time, "just to play one more game of fox-and-geese, or hide-the-switch." Some of the songs that we sang and some of the games that we played, part singing, part acting, part dancing, still linger in my memory and carry me back to the happiness of childhood. Always in my childhood memories, especially in happy memories, I find associated together my mother, my home, and the Negro slaves.

During the winter evenings, when it was disagreeable out of doors, I would get permission for four or five Negro boys and girls to play with me in the library, or in the nursery. Here we would play indoor games ; jack-straws, blind-man's-buff, checks, checkers, pantomime, geography puzzles, conundrum matches and spelling bees. Frequently I would read the Negroes fairy stories, or show them pictures in the magazines and books of art. I remember how we used to linger over a beautiful picture of Lord William Russell bidding adieu to his family before going to execution ; and how in boyish way I would tell the Negroes the story of his unhappy fate and his wife's devotion. Another favorite picture was the coronation of Queen Victoria. How we delighted in "Audubon's Birds" and in the beautifully colored plates and animals in the government publications on natural history. The pleasure was by no means one-sided. To our hotch-pot of amusement and instruction the Negroes contributed marvelous tales of birds and animals, which more than offset my familiar reminiscences of Queen Victoria and Lord Russell.

It was a great privilege during slavery for the white children to visit Negro cabins at night and listen to their folk lore. Those delightful stories immortalized by Joel Chandler Harris, in the character of Uncle Remus, I heard many times in my youth, and many others besides equally delightful. There is a marvelous attraction between a white child and a Negro ; even between a little child and a grown Negro. I always found it a pleasure to sit in the cabins and watch them at work. It was a pleasure just to be with them. I have eaten many a meal with my father's slaves in their cabins, always treated with consideration, respect and affection, but not greater than I myself felt for the master and mistress of the humble cabin. My mother would have punished severely any disrespect or rudeness on my part toward the older Negroes. I would not have dared to call them by their names. It was always "Uncle Tom" or

"Aunt Susan," when I addressed them. This form of appellation was common in the South between whites and blacks. Even a strange Negro, whose name was not known, however humble he might be, was saluted on the high road, when passed by a respectable white person, with the friendly greeting of "Howdye, Uncle," or "Howdye, Auntie."

Social intercourse between white and black during slavery was not confined to children. Not infrequently the Negro women would come to the "White House" to see the mistress, often in the evenings, sitting and chatting in the nursery or the ladies' sitting room. Visits to the slave cabins were made regularly, oftentimes daily, by the white women of the household, who went not merely to visit the sick and inspect the children, to advise and direct about work and household matters, but to show their personal interest in and regard for the Negroes themselves, not as slaves, nor workers, but as individuals, as human beings, and sometimes as dear friends. In short, a social visit was made; not upon terms of social equality, but still a social visit, during which the news of the plantation or neighborhood, and occasionally of the larger world, was exchanged and discussed. This custom existed to some extent even on large plantations, where the slaves were more isolated and herded together in larger numbers. On small farms, where the races were about equal numerically, and in all households there was constant and very familiar contact between white and black. The white women in Southern households usually aided and directed the work of the Negroes. The mistress sewed or cut garments in the same room with the slave seamstresses. The lady's maid slept upon a couch or pallet in her lady's chamber, or the one adjoining. The cooks, dining-room servants, nurses, laundresses, coachmen, houseboys, gardeners, shoemakers, carpenters, blacksmiths and mechanics generally were in daily enjoyment of a very considerable degree of social intercourse with the white race. They entered into the traditions and spirit of the family to

which they belonged, defended its name and its honor, accepted in a rude way its ideas of courtesy, morality and religion, and thus became to a considerable degree inheritors of the civilization of the white race. It was this semi-social intercourse between the two races, without any approach to social equality, this daily and hourly contact producing personal interest, friendship and affection, added to the industrial training of slavery that transformed the Negro so quickly from a savage to a civilized man.

The one great evil connected with race familiarity, the evil of licentiousness and miscegenation, while degrading to the white race was not entirely harmful to the Negro. Nearly all the leaders of the Negro race, both during slavery and since, have been Mulattoes; and the two really great men credited to the Negro race in the United States have been the sons of white fathers, and strongly marked by the mental and moral qualities of the white race. The Mulatto is quicker, brighter, and more easily refined than the Negro. There is a general opinion among Southern people that he is inferior morally; but I believe that his only inferiority is physical and vital. It cannot be denied that the Negro race has been very greatly elevated by its Mulatto members. Indeed, if you strike from its records all that Mulattoes have said and done, little would be left. Wherever work requiring refinement, extra intelligence and executive ability is performed, you will find it usually directed by Mulattoes.

But the social intercourse between the races in the South, which was so helpful to the blacks, has now practically ceased. The children of this generation no longer play and frolic together. White ladies no longer visit Negro cabins. The familiar salutation of "Uncle" or "Auntie" is no longer heard. The lady's maid sleeps no more by the bedside of her mistress. The Southern woman with her helpless little children in solitary farm house no longer sleeps secure in the absence of her husband with doors unlocked but safely guarded by black men whose lives would be freely

given in her defence. But now, when a knock is heard at the door, she shudders with nameless horror. The black brute is lurking in the dark, a monstrous beast, crazed with lust. His ferocity is almost demoniacal. A mad bull or a tiger could scarcely be more brutal. A whole community is now frenzied with horror, with blind and furious rage for vengeance. A stake is driven ; the wretched brute, covered with oil, bruised and gashed, beaten and hacked and maimed, amid the jeers and shouts and curses, the tears of anger and of joy, the prayers and the maledictions of thousands of civilized people, in the sight of school-houses, court-houses and churches is burned to death. Since the abolition of slavery and the growing up of a new generation of Negroes, crimes that are too hideous to describe have been committed every month, every week, frequently every day, against the helpless women and children of the white race, crimes that were unknown in slavery. And, in turn, cruelties have been inflicted upon Negroes by whole communities of whites, which, if attempted during slavery, would have been prevented at any sacrifice. I do not hesitate to say that more horrible crimes have been committed by the generation of Negroes that have grown up in the South since slavery than by the six preceding generations in slavery. And also that the worst cruelties of slavery all combined for two centuries were not equal to the savage barbarities inflicted in retaliation upon the Negroes by the whites during the last twenty years. This condition of things is too horrible to last. It must grow better ; or else grow worse, and by its own fury destroy both black and white.

Between the older generations in the South there is still warm affection. Whenever I visit my old home, all the Negroes that are able, come to see me, many traveling considerable distances. The last time I was there my nurse and playmate, a woman of fifty years, about six years my elder, threw her arms around me and wept like a child, completely overcome with emotion. She was honest, virtuous, industri-

ous, intelligent, affectionate and faithful. She had been raised from childhood by my mother and had slept every night in my mother's bed room. I am sure that every member of my father's family would have risked his life to protect her. And she would have greatly preferred death to seeing misfortune or disaster visit our family. My youngest brother's nurse, dying about ten years after emancipation, made her will and left her little store of goods and property, worth perhaps a hundred dollars, to her white nursling, "little Master Robert." A few days ago a Negro man was pardoned from the State penitentiary in North Carolina, by the Governor. The following letter secured his pardon. It was written by his former master and playmate, a captain in the Confederate army, an ex-member of Congress, a Democratic member of the recent State Legislature :

To His Excellency Honorable CHARLES B. AYCOCK, *Governor of North Carolina.*

DEAR SIR : I respectfully and earnestly petition you to pardon William Alexander, a Negro convicted of burglary in the year 1889, in Mecklenburg County. William was born on my father's plantation, and is about fifty-eight or fifty-nine years old, one or two years my junior. I need only state that his father was our coachman and his mother our cook, to show you my opportunity was good for knowing him. He was my slave, and his father and mother died on my plantation. William was not smart, or, to use a plantation term, was less bright than any of the young Negroes on the plantation. Knowing both of the Negroes connected with him in the burglary, I feel no hesitation in assuring you that I believe that they persuaded him to join them. William has now served about twelve years. This is an excessive punishment for a Negro of a low order of intelligence. If he came of a bad family, I would not ask his pardon. His family is as good as any Negro family in this state. He is the only one that has ever been indicted for crime. I could get others to sign a petition, but it would be a favor for me, not him, for an ordinary Negro confined in the penitentiary for twelve years is a forgotten man. Governor, I pray you to pardon William Alexander ; and, if he will, he can return to my plantation where the friend of his boyhood will give him a home.

Very respectfully,
RALEIGH, N. C., *March 26, 1901.*

S. B. ALEXANDER.

The industrial relations of the races have also undergone great changes in the South, though not so marked as the changes in social and personal relations. Under slavery almost all the labor of the South was performed by Negroes, or by Negroes and whites working side by side. The South was lacking in manufactures, and used little machinery. Its demand for skilled labor was not large, but what demand existed was supplied mainly by Negroes. Negro carpenters, plasterers, bricklayers, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, painters, harnessmakers, tanners, millers, weavers, barrel-makers, basketmakers, shoemakers, chairmakers, coachmen, spinners, seamstresses, housekeepers, gardeners, cooks, laundresses, embroiderers, maids of all work, could be found in every community, and frequently on a single plantation. Skilled labor was more profitable than unskilled, and therefore every slave was made as skilful as was possible under a slave system. The young Negroes were brought up to labor, from an early age. The smartest girls were trained to domestic service in its various branches, and became practically members of the family, so far as careful training was concerned. Many of them could sew, knit, crochet, embroider, cut, fit and make garments, clean up house, wash and iron, spin and weave, even more skilfully than the mistress who had taught them. All the garments that I wore in childhood were made by Negroes or by my mother, with the single exception of the hat. Negro lads who showed aptitude for trades, were hired out under a sort of apprentice system, and taught to be skilful as carpenters, masons, smiths, and the like. The Negro artisans were very jealous of their rights, and stood upon their professional skill and knowledge. I remember, one day, my father, who was a lawyer, offered some suggestions to one of his slaves, a fairly-good carpenter, who was building us a barn. The old Negro heard him with ill-concealed disgust, and replied: "Look here, Master, you'se a first-rate lawyer, no doubt; but you don't know nothing 'bout carpenter-

ing. You better go back to your law books." The most accomplished housemaid, maid-of-all-work, laundress, nurse, dining-room servant, in our household was a woman named Emily, and the most accomplished man-of-all-work, carpenter, coachman, 'possum-hunter, fisherman, story-teller, boy amuser, was Emily's brother, Andrew. They had been given to my father in his youth by my grandfather, and had attended him to college, working in the dining-room, to pay for his education. They were present at my father's wedding, and for twenty years remained members of the household, exceedingly useful and skilful; and, I may add, exceedingly privileged characters. They far surpassed in efficiency and versatility any white laborers in the county. I remember, one Sunday, the family came home earlier than usual from church, there being no services on account of the illness of the minister. On entering his bed room my father beheld a strange and yet familiar looking Negro arrayed in dress-suit standing in front of the mirror, with arms akimbo, and swallow-tails of the coat switching from side to side in token of pride and satisfaction. It was Emily, arrayed in her master's best suit, enjoying a new sensation. No punishment was inflicted on her. Nor do I remember that any of my father's slaves were ever punished, except such switching as was given the children, on which occasions I was usually present, a most unwilling participant and fellow-victim.

When emancipation came at the close of the Civil War, it was understood by the average Negro to mean freedom from labor. Freedom, leisure, idleness was now his greatest pleasure. How delightful it was to tell old master now that he had business in town and couldn't work to-day; to leave the plow and hoe idle; to meet other Negroes on the streets, to spend the day loafing, chatting, shouting, oftentimes drinking and dancing or quarreling and fighting. Sambo was now a gentleman of leisure, and he enjoyed it to the full. It was easy to live in the South. The mild climate

and fertile soil, the abundance of game in forest and stream, the bountiful supply of wild fruits, the accessibility of forests with firewood free to all, the openhanded generosity and universal carelessness of living made it possible for the average Negro to idle away at least half his time and yet live in tolerable comfort.

The national government, to guard against distress among the Negroes and to prevent oppression by the whites, neither of which was at all possible, now established throughout the South, for the distribution of food and clothing and the administration of justice between the races, the Freedman's Bureau. This institution was in every respect most unfortunate. The Negro ran away from his old master's cornfield and his appeals to work in order to enjoy the free bounty of the federal government. I knew a Negro to walk one hundred miles in order to obtain half a bushel of corn meal from the bureau. In the time required he might have earned by labor four and a half bushels, or nine times what he got by begging. But the evils of idleness, although great, would soon have passed away, if the two races had been left alone. The Southern whites were familiar with and very tolerant of the Negro's weaknesses and petty vices. They looked upon him with sympathy and sorrow, with friendship and affection, rather than with anger, resentment, and hostility. They were anxious to see him go to work even more diligently than in slavery, acquire property, and improve his moral and physical condition. The races still remained very close together, in their daily lives, interests and affections. They might have worked out a future along lines far different from those they are now following. It was decreed otherwise by fate.

The bestowal of political rights upon the Negro, the disfranchisement of almost every prominent white man in the South, the migration from the North of political carpet-baggers and their manipulation of the Negro vote, the Civil Rights Bill, the Force Bill, the zeal of educational and

religious missionaries, most of whom preached and practiced the social and civil equality of the races ; in short, the dark, dismal and awful night of Reconstruction, following swift upon the storm of Civil War with its unparalleled destruction of life and property, now threatened the very foundations of civilization in all the Southern states. The bonds between the races were broken at last. The Negro did not endorse all the demands that were made in his behalf. He knew they were impossible. Still he was profoundly influenced by them. In slavery he was like an animal in harness ; well trained, gentle and affectionate ; in early freedom the harness was off, but still the habit of obedience and the force of affection endured and prevented a run-away. In Reconstruction came a consciousness of being unharnessed, unhitched, unbridled and unrestrained. The wildest excesses followed. The machinery of government was seized in every Southern state by men recently slaves, now guided by political adventures. Southern halls of legislation, once glorified by the eloquence of Patrick Henry, the wisdom of Marshall, or the patriotism of Washington, now resounded with the drunken snorings or the unmeaning gibberish of Cuffee and Sambo. Negro strumpets in silks and satins led wild orgies at inaugural balls in marble halls that blushed and closed their eyes. "Uncle Tom" and "Aunt Susan" were now entirely vanished. The family cook now demanded to be known as Mrs. Jackson, and the chambermaid as Miss Marguerite. I know an unmarried Negress, about twenty-five years of age, the mother of three illegitimate children, who requires her own children to call her on all occasions, "Miss Mary." It was not a time for the learning of new trades by the emancipated race. It was not a time for new industries, or increased efficiency of labor. The Negro was intoxicated with the license of freedom ; the North was blinded by sentimentality and the passions of war ; the South was fighting for civilization and existence. It is all over now. I forbear to characterize it further.

Some day the historian, the poet, the painter, the dramatist will picture Reconstruction, and will make the saddest picture in the annals of the English-speaking race.

But Reconstruction is ended at last. For the first time since 1870 the National House of Representatives contains not a single Negro.

For the first time in our history the American Negro is almost friendless. The North, tired of Negro politicians and Negro beggars, is beginning to say : " We have helped the Negro enough ; let him now help himself and work out his own salvation." The South, worn out with strife over the Negro and supporting with difficulty its awful burden of Negro ignorance, inefficiency and criminality, is beginning to ask whether the race is really capable of development, or is a curse and a hindrance in the way of Southern progress and civilization.

The two races are drifting apart. They were closer together in slavery than they have been since. Old time sympathies, friendships and affections created by two centuries of slavery, are rapidly passing away. A single generation of freedom has almost destroyed them. Unless a change is made, coming generations will be separated by active hatred and hostility. The condition of the Negro is indeed pitiful ; and his prospects for the future are dark and gloomy. There is no solution of the problem, unless it is dealt with from the standpoint of reason and experience, without prejudice or fanaticism.

The Negro is a child race. If isolated from the world and left to himself, he might slowly grow into manhood along separate lines and develop a Negro civilization ; but in the United States such isolation and such development are quite impossible. The Negro here is bound to be under the tutelage and control of the whites. No legal enactment, no political agitation, no scheme of education can alter this fact. It is better for the Negro that it should be so ; better that he should be dispersed among the white people, living

with them and learning their ways, than to be deported to Africa, or segregated somewhere in America, to work out slowly a separate and distinct Negro civilization.

The tutelage of the Negro is not yet complete. It lasted through six generations of slavery, directed by Southern whites. It has continued through one generation of freedom, directed by Northern whites, acting through Federal legislation, through Federal courts, through political, educational and religious missionaries working among the Negroes in the Southern states. The folly and the futility of Northern tutelage is now fully demonstrated ; and the Negro is again under the tutelage of the South, to remain there until the race problem is finally settled.

The real question is not one of tutelage *versus* self-development, but whether the necessary tutelage of the Negro under the white race shall be one of friendship and sympathy or one of prejudice and hostility. To such a question only one answer is possible. It would be a cruelty greater than slavery to leave this helpless race, this child race, to work out its own salvation in fierce and hostile competition with the strongest and best developed race on the globe. The Negro can expect no peculiar development. He must aim at white civilization ; and must reach it through the support, guidance and control of the white people among whom he lives. He must regain the active friendship and affection of the Southern whites. He will do so if let alone by the North. The South once liked him and loved him, and will do so again if he will permit and deserve it. The North, through force of arms and legal enactment, has given him physical freedom ; but moral and intellectual freedom must come through the help of the descendants of his former masters. If this help be not given, there is no hope for the race. Against the prejudice and passion, the neglect and oppression, the competition and hostility which will inevitably result from a continuance of the relations now existing between the two races in the South the Negro

will be ground to powder. His progress depends absolutely upon the restoration of friendly relations to the whites. Nor is this a matter of easy accomplishment. Two things are requisite ;

1. The withdrawal of the Negro from politics.
2. His increased efficiency as a laborer.

The withdrawal of the Negro from politics is now being accomplished by legislation in the various Southern States. If this is interrupted by the North, and the old battle of Reconstruction fought again, the result will be the complete and final estrangement of the two races, with prejudice and hostility too intense to permit their living peaceably together.

Greater industrial efficiency would prove an everlasting bond between the races in the South. It is the real key to the problem. Let the Negro make himself indispensable as a workman, and he may rely upon the friendship and affection of the whites. But the best energies of the race since emancipation have been diverted from industrial fields into politics, preaching and education. Until recently its leaders have not regarded industrial effort as a means of progress. But public sentiment in the South still welcomes the Negro to every field of labor that he is capable of performing. The whole field of industry is open to him. The Southern whites are not troubled by his efficiency but by his inefficiency. For a full generation the Negro has had opportunity to control every industry in the South. Had he devoted himself, upon emancipation, to manual labor and the purchase of land instead of to politics, religion and education, he would own to-day at least one-half the soil of the Southern states.

There is abundant room for Northern philanthropy in helping to uplift the Southern Negro. A Hampton Institute, or a Tuskegee, should be established in every congressional district. But this alone will not suffice. The Negro laborer, like the white laborer, needs the industrial training of his

daily employer. He needs, daily and hourly, the sympathy, encouragement, instruction, admonition and restraint of his white employer. These are given to the white boy or girl ; and are received usually with willingness and profit. But such help is not given to the Negro ; nor is it desired. Negro children are less courteous to white people now than white children were to Negroes during slavery.

The Negro race is a child race and must remain in tutelage for years to come ; in tutelage not of colleges and universities, but of industrial schools, of skilled and efficient labor, of character building by honest work and honest dealing, of good habits and good manners, of respect for elders and superiors, of daily employment on the farm, in the household, the shop, the forest, the factory and the mine. Slavery gave the Negro a better industrial training than he has to-day. Freedom has increased his zeal and his opportunity, but diminished his skill. The door of his opportunity will not always be open. He must enter now. If he do not, he will remain for a while among the races of the earth a dull and stupid draught animal ; and finally will pass away, incompetent. But, with the help of the white race he may obtain opportunity to develop his powers, he may subdue his animal passions and cultivate his gentler emotions, may train his physical strength into skill and power, may grow from childhood into mature manhood ; and in the providence of God may yet add strength to the civilization of a people, who, through the tutelage of slavery, with sorrow and tears, with labor and anguish, with hope and charity brought him from barbarism to civilization, from heathenism to christianity.